

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PEKING 00236 120158Z

67

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 NSCE-00 CPR-01 SSC-01 IO-11 /081 W

----- 041141

P R 110859Z FEB 76

FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5137

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KOOG

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

CONFIDENTIAL PEKING 0236

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR CH UR US

SUBJECT: SOVIET DIPLOMAT'S COMMENTS ON APPOINTMENT OF HUA KUO-FENG

AS PRC ACTING PREMIER

1. SUMMARY: A SOVIET DIPLOMAT IN PEKING, PRESUMABLY REFLECTING CURRENT SOVIET EMBASSY SPECULATION ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE ELEVATION OF HUA KUO-FENG TO BE PRC ACTING PREMIER, TOLD US ON FEBRUARY 10 HE DID NOT THINK THAT TENG HSIAO-PING SUFFERED A MAJOR DEFEAT AS A RESULT OF HIS FAILURE TO BE NAMED PREMIER. THE DIPLOMAT (FIRST SECRETARY KOLESKOV) SAID FLATLY THAT TENG RETAINED HIS FORMER TITLES AND PROBABLY MUCH OF HIS POWER BASE. AT THE SAME TIME, HE DESCRIBED HUA'S APPOINTMENT AS A "POSITIVE" DEVELOPMENT IN SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS AND IMPLIED THE SOVIETS FELT RELIEF THAT THEIR OLD OPPONENT TENG HAD AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT FAILED TO CONSOLIDATE HIS POWER BY BECOMING PREMIER. END SUMMARY.

2. KOLESNIKOV SAID THE SOVIETS HAD BEEN COMPLETELY SURPRISED BY HUA KUO-FENG'S APPOINTMENT AND FIRST LEARNED OF IT FROM THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PEKING 00236 120158Z

FEBRUARY 7 NCNA REPORT. HE ASSUMED THAT A POLITBURO OR

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING HAD TAKEN PLACE BUT SAID HE HAD NO DEFINITE INFORMATION THAT IT HAD OR WHEN THE DECISION TO ELEVATE HUA HAD BEEN MADE. ACCORDING TO KOLESNIKOV, THE SOVIETS BELIEVE THERE IS CONSIDERABLE TENSION BETWEEN "MODERATES" AND "RADICALS" IN THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP AT THE PRESENT TIME AS EVIDENCED BY THE EDUCATION CAMPAIGN-- AND THE ELEVATION OF TENG HSIAO-PING AT THIS TIME WOULD HAVE EXACERBATED THE TENSION. TENG MAY HAVE SEEN THIS HIMSELF AND WITHDRAWN HIS CANDIDACY FOR THE TIME BEING--OR BEEN TOLD TO DO THIS BY MAO TSE-TUNG--IN ORDER TO AVOID JEOPARDIZING "STABILITY AND UNITY" AND THE EFFORTS FOR CONSTRUCTION AND PRODUCTION. THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP THEN TURNED TO THE LESS CONTROVERSIAL HUA KUO-FENG WHO AS A PRAGMATIST AND GOOD ADMINISTRATOR WAS WELL SUITED FOR THE TASK OF BUILDING CHINA.

3. KOLESNIKOV CONTINUED THAT THE SOVIET EMBASSY THUS CONSIDERS HUA'S APPOINTMENT TO HAVE BEEN THE RESULT OF A COMPROMISE BETWEEN THE MODERATES AND THE RADICALS, WITH THE BALANCE QUITE HEAVILY IN FAVOR OF THE MODERATES. HE SAID HE THOUGHT IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT HUA'S APPOINTMENT MAY PROVE TEMPORARY AND TENG COULD YET BE NAMED PREMIER BUT THAT IT WAS MORE LIKELY THAT HUA WOULD BE CONFIRMED AS PREMIER AND TENG WOULD ASSUME THE NUMBER TWO SPOT IN THE PARTY WHILE RETAINING HIS GOVERNMENT TITLES.

4. AT THE SAME TIME, ACCORDING TO KOLESNIKOV, THE SOVIETS CONSIDER HUA'S APPOINTMENT TO BE A "POSITIVE" DEVELOPMENT FOR SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS. THEY HAD REVIEWED THEIR FILES ON HUA AND WERE STRUCK BY THE ABSENCE OF "HEARTFELT VINDICTIVENESS" IN HIS STATEMENTS AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION. KOLESNIKOV COMPARED HUA'S RELATIVELY MILD SPEECH IN TIBET LAST YEAR WITH THE STRONG SPEECH BY CHEN HSI-LIEN ISINKIANG IN OCTOBER AS A CASE IN POINT. WHILE CAUTIONING THAT IT WAS STILL TOO EARLY TO TELL, HE SUGGESTED THAT HUA'S APPOINTMENT MAY PRESAGE AN EASING OF THE ANTI-SOVIET TIRADES IN CHINESE MEDIA. THEY HAVE NOTED SOME IMPROVEMENT IN THE LAST FEW DAYS BUT DOES NOT KNOW IF THIS IS INDICATIVE OF A LONG-RANGE TREND. OTHER THAN A POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENT IN SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS, THE SOVIETS APPARENTLY DO NOT EXPECT ANY MAJOR CHANGES IN PRC FOREIGN POLICY AS THE RESULT OF HUA'S APPOINTMENT. THEY WERE SURPRISED TO FIND THAT HUA HAD MET WITH SOME FORTY DIFFERENT

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PEKING 00236 120158Z

DELEGATIONS IN THE PAST WHICH GIVE HIM MORE FOREIGN AFFAIRS EXPERIENCE THAN IS GENERALLY ASSUMED. ON IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES, KOLESNIKOV POINTED TO THE UPCOMING NIXON VISIT TO THE PRC AS AN INDICATION THAT SINO-U.S. RELATIONS WOULD NOT CHANGE.

5. COMMENT: AT THIS POINT, WE WOULD NOT PUT TOO MUCH VALUE ON KOLESNIKOV'S STATEMENT OF THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF HUA'S APPOINT-

MENT OR SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS. SOVIET EMBASSY PERSONNEL IN PEKING USUALLY TAKE AN OPTIMISTIC LINE ON THE POSSIBILITIES FOR AN IMPROVEMENT IN SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS AND KOLESNIKOV'S STATEMENTS ARE OBVIOUSLY SPECULATIVE AT THIS POINT. NEVERTHELESS, THE SOVIETS MAY BE GENUINELY RELIEVED THAT TENG, WHOM THEY REGARD AS ONE OF THE WORST CHINESE SOVIET BAITERS, WAS NOT PROMOTED TO THE PREMIERSHIP.

THAYER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS, POLITICAL LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 FEB 1976
Decapton Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PEKING00236
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760052-0939
From: PEKING
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760259/aaaabzys.tel
Line Count: 123
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <31 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET DIPLOMAT'S COMMENTS ON APPOINTMENT OF HUA KUO-FENG AS PRC ACTING PREMIER
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, CH, UR, US, (KOLESKOV), (HUA KUO-FENG)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006